

August 23, 1990

### NOTES ON IRONMAN

Stan Lee and I met this week to discuss the first draft of the Ironman script. We found ourselves in agreement on the following points:

Our impression of the script is that although it begins well, it soon becomes silly and loses any sense of danger or threat to Ironman. In fact the character of Tony Stark disappears about half way through the script and we are left with a very broad farce about marketing toys. There is very little reason for us to be on Tony Stark's side and very little is made of his weak heart or his need to wear the Ironman suit to stabilize a dangerous cardiac condition.

1. The heart attack that Tony suffers at the top of the film should be used to show his vulnerability. It should not be brought on by a poisoned bottle of mineral water but by the stress that Stark is wrestling within himself. The heart attack should be much more life-threatening.

Tony's insistence on holding onto the brief case is good but we should see him put on the Ironman suit to save his own life and should learn later that the genesis of the suit was out of a need to stabilize his weakened heart which was damaged by a piece of shrapnel (or bullet) which can not be removed without killing him.

Further, Tony should not recover so quickly or fully from this heart attack. We need to see him struggling against his weakened condition which will build both sympathy and tension. At any time, another cardiac episode could finish him.

This is the center of Tony Stark's dilemma, all the money in the world can not buy him good health.

2. Tony Stark and Ironman need an opponent who can equal him and seemingly destroy him if any tension is to be achieved. We can not fall into the trap of the first Superman film which turned evil genius Lex Luthor into a clown.

Jeremy Bland has potential as a formidable foe for Tony Stark but he becomes silly and ineffectual as he is hooked on virtual reality. We suggest that if Bland is becoming psychotic due to exposure to virtual reality his madness should be expressed in more frightening and less silly ways. He should become more ruthless and dangerous and should be obsessed with destroying Tony Stark and Ironman at all costs.

3. Similarly, the VRMN creature becomes ridiculous and loses all threat. We would suggest getting rid of the rap-speak and Baby Ruth munching characteristics and instead focus on the idea that this warfare robot has terrible capabilities which can be used to destroy Ironman. In fact, this could be the reason that Tony Stark has locked the WRP robot in his secret vault -- because if it ever got out of control not even he (as Ironman) could stop it.

We could show this with a scene at the start of the film similar to the one now in place. But we would suggest that the Japanese character, Hokaido could be there and at a certain moment he must stop the match to save Ironman by using a failsafe device that Stark has programmed into the WRP robot. Later when Bland discovers the warfare robot, he could remove the failsafe device. We feel that

the WRP robot should serve as Bland's tool (although a very powerful one) to destroy Ironman, but Bland himself must be the true threat to Tony Stark.

We would also suggest against turning the robot into a child's idea of the ultimate monster -- this becomes very silly and diverts the story into a heavy handed lampoon of corporate marketing, which has little if anything to do with Ironman and succeeds only in diffusing any threat that has been established.

4. We like the idea of turning virtual reality into a weapon against Ironman and suggest that it could be implanted into his helmet without his knowledge causing him to experience hallucinations and mirages which confuse and frustrate him. This could also drive him mad and/or bring about a terminal heart attack.

When Ironman realizes what has been done to him, he tears off his helmet and must fight the WRP robot without its protection making himself even more vulnerable.

5. Bland's plot to kidnap and replace Tony Stark is good but the tension is lost when Stark escapes and just wanders around in the desert (and out of the movie). Wouldn't Bland be desperate to find him and wipe him out before his scheme is discovered?

6. We liked Tom Craig's idea that the actor "Stark" is destroyed by Bland detonating an explosive device that was inserted into the actor's skull during the plastic surgery.

7. If Hokaido is introduced at the top of the film as Tony Stark's head of research and development, his death will have much more impact both to Tony and the audience. His death should end the scene. We do not need the Batman rerun of dropping another thug off a roof.

8. The relationship between Tony and Marlene Fortune needs to be developed. The moment she learns that Tony Stark is Ironman has no impact. In fact it is unclear in this script what the public's conception of Ironman is. We prefer the idea that everyone thinks Ironman is a robot designed to protect Stark Industries. No one knows a man is inside the suit, let alone its creator Tony Stark.